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Hemicoelus nitidus (Herbst) (Col.: Anobiidae) at Windsor

To get the best migrants, it seems you must have luck (Wild, 1990 *Ent. Rec.* **102**, 171). You need luck, too, in catching rare beetles. I brought home a fallen branch of field maple from Windsor Great Park in January 1984 and put it in pieces in a polythene bag but, by the end of the summer, all that had emerged were a few unexciting beetles and two, nasty looking sawflies. I gave the sawflies to my friend Mark Shaw and discarded the pieces of branch on to our compost heap. Understandably, I was taken aback when I was told that the sawflies were examples of *Xiphidria longicollis* (Geoffroy), not previously recorded from Britain (Shaw & Liston, 1985 *Ent. Gaz.* **36**: 233). Luckily our compost heap is the sort which is only emptied once a decade. So I retrieved the pieces of branch in case there were more to emerge and put them in another polythene bag.

During the next summer no more sawflies emerged, but in July, two beetles appeared in the bag. They looked for all the world like the common furniture beetles but they were not this species, they were specimens of *Hemicoelus nitidus* (Herbst) — the second and third examples to be recorded in Britain. But for the sawflies being special, the beetles would have emerged unnoticed on the compost heap and the specimen of *H. nitidus* collected by my friend Howard Mendel in Suffolk (1982, *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **118**: 253) would have remained the only one known from Britain.

It was lucky too, as I found out later, that I found the fallen branch in winter, for there is nearby a permanent campsite for young persons. Had the fallen branch been left lying there till the summer, it would have found itself on a camp-fire.

When my colleagues and I failed during the next few years to find other examples of the beetle in spite of diligent search of the area, I thought, without complaint, that my quota of luck on this beetle had been used up but, as I passed the tree on an unrelated errand six years later (February 1990), there was another fallen branch. By July, I had another three examples of *H. nitidus*. I shall push my luck and keep the branch for another year!

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